

## Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Alexander Melville Bell, Eliza Symonds Bell, Carrie Bell, January 27, 1873, with transcript

3rd copy Copy of a letter written by Alexander Graham Bell to his parents and Carrie.<sup>35</sup>  
West Newton Street, Boston, January 27th, 1873. Dear Papa, Mama and Carrie:

The newspaper reports about the smallpox are greatly exaggerated. Since the Board of Health commenced their operations the disease has been steadily losing ground. No new cases have been reported during the past week. You need not be uneasy on my account. I am not in the best of health. I seem to feel better after a good rousing sick headache. I have had one since Thursday, but have got up this morning (Monday) without a sign of it. I spent Sunday in bed and the rest did me good.

I have received three professional applications during the past few days. 1st. Miss Drew wants to study Scotch pronunciation. 2nd. A young Ladies' School wants instruction in Elocution (recommended by Prof. Monroe) — and I go tomorrow to see a little boy with defective speech.

The Bill incorporating the Loomis Aerial Telegraph Company has received the President's signature. Dr. Loomis proposes to work machinery by atmospheric electricity, as well as to telegraph to Europe. He has already succeeded in obtaining a nearly constant supply of electricity by means of a Kite. He believes by going still higher he will reach a constantly electrified stratus of air.

I trust that Mamma's shoulder has not been such hurt. You will be almost afraid to go out in that unfortunate Cutter. It seems to be doomed to meet with accidents. A heavy snow storm is 2 upon Boston to-day. I suppose you have it your way also.

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When I left Brantford, I got a look at the Globe newspaper at Harrisburg and saw that the Parthia was in.

On reaching Northampton I found Miss Hull there. She accompanied me to Hartford, and spent the next day at the Institution.

Returning to Northampton for a few days, she came to Boston with Miss Rogers. Both are here now, boarding in this house. I am surprised to find how very little ear Mise Hull possesses. I have to treat her voice in the same way as if she were deaf.

She had a terrible voyage. With Visible Speech she is doing well but again comes in a wonderful lack of ear.

Many thanks for the perpetual Calendar received — for the Christmas cards, and for the newspaper cutting. The approach toward the bird-type in a human being, is curious, interesting and startling. It affords a by-no-means unique instance of the changing of a given type. Many animals have gone through the same changes until a race of flying animals have arisen. The Racoon and the Squirrel, have originated what are improperly called the “flying” varieties. In these cases we have a very close approach towards a true wing, but these races have not yet developed sufficiently to be possessed of the power of flight. In the mouse and the rat race however a true wing has been developed — in the Bat and the Vampire.

Should young Andre Foglin live to perpetuate his 3 peculiarities, posterity may perhaps believe in Darwin as I do.

I cannot understand the prejudice with which many people view an honest and hard-working investigator like Darwin.

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Geology has shown us that the scriptural account of the Creation cannot be taken in a literal sense. To me it is infinitely more reasonable to suppose that Man is lineally descended from a monkey, than that he was moulded out of a piece of dirt!

Indeed if we do not put our own interpretation on the old testament I do not see how Darwinism is opposed to the Scriptures. Darwin has revealed laws by which (given an inconceivable length of time) the whole vegetable and animal kingdoms (including man) have been developed from inorganic elements by only one simple art of creation. Geology has shown not only that that inconceivable length of time has existed, but has even recovered the remains of animals that blend the characters of what are now distinct species of animals. Indeed several of Darwin's theoretical animals and plants have been found to have had an actual existence.

When Africa — the home of the man-like apes — and doubtless the cradle of the human race has been searched, we may look forward to the discovery of human fossils approaching still nearer the ape form than the fossils men found in France — or the lower type of Africans.

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Have you seen Darwin's new book, on "Expression in Man and Animals"? Tracing back vocal language and gestures — and investigating and comparing the means by which social animals communicate with one another? If not — it is worth reading. But enough of Darwin for to-day.

With much love, Aleck. Prof. A. M. Bell, Brantford.